

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ALASKA STATE LABORATORIES

SEAN PARNELL, GOVERNOR

STATE VIROLOGY LABORATORY

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Dear Health Care Providers,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the 2012 – 2013 Influenza Sentinel Program. The samples you send us will allow us to monitor the prevalence, type and antiviral susceptibility of influenza in our communities. It will also allow us to detect other viral infections that occur during a typical Influenza season.

ASVL will send you all the supplies and postage you need to participate. Collection and shipping instructions are on the other side of this page and additional information can be found in our Lab Service Manual at http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/labs/publications/image/Lab_Svcs_Manual.pdf.

We are asking your facility to send **up to 10 samples per week** from patients with influenza like illness (ILI). We are particularly interested in samples that are from:

1. Patients who have already been vaccinated this year
2. Patients with unusual signs and symptoms in addition to ILI.
3. Patients who are very old, very young, or those who are immunocompromised
4. Patients who are hospitalized
5. Your Rapid Influenza Diagnostic Tests (RIDT's):
 - Positive RIDT's in the beginning of the season
 - Negative RIDT's once the season is in full swing
 - Positive RIDT's at the end of the season

The ASVL testing algorithm has not changed from last year.

1. All respiratory specimens will be screened for Influenza by PCR.
2. ASVL will attempt to subtype and finalize all positive Influenza A samples.
 - You can expect a 3 day turn-around-time on most positive influenza results.
 - Influenza A samples that can't be subtyped at ASVL will be sent to CDC if they meet the criteria.
3. All PCR negative Influenza samples will be cultured in an attempt to identify other respiratory viruses.
 - The turn-around-time for culture can vary from 3 days to more than 2 weeks.

At CDC's request, your influenza isolate, or what is left of the original material, may be shipped to a CDC reference lab so circulating influenza strains can be compared to the current vaccine and to monitor for antiviral resistance. These results are used by CDC and will not be returned to the individual providers.

Thank You,

Bonnie Bond, MS MT,
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Your Collection Kit will include:

1. Universal transport media (UTM)
2. Dacron nasal and nasopharyngeal swabs
3. Individual biohazard bags
4. Refrigerant gel packs
5. Shipping containers with postage-paid ASVL address labels and Diagnostic Specimen Labels.
6. A copy of the **Fairbanks Lab Request Form**.
 - The highlighted fields are required
 - The form is a fillable form and can be found on our website at:
<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/labs/publications/image/FbxSupplyReq.pdf> .

Collection

1. We are asking hospitals and clinics to send **up to 10 samples per week** from patients with ILI.
2. The following specimen types are preferred for PCR and culture:
 - Nasopharyngeal Swab (NP)
 - Throat Swab (TS)
 - Other specimen types are acceptable and are listed in the drop-down box on the Lab Request Form.
 - Nasal Swab (NS)
 - Nasal Wash (NW)
3. After culturing the patient, place the swab into the Universal Transport Medium (UTM).
4. Be sure to break the swab's shaft off short enough so you can screw the cap down completely.
5. If you have a wash or lavage, aseptically transfer up to 3 ml into the UTM vial.
6. If you submit tissue, transfer a pea sized piece (approximately 1 gram) into the UTM.
7. Label the vial with the patient's name, DOB, date collected and your facilities name.

Shipment

1. To decrease the chance of the sample leaking in transit: *(Leaking samples are unsatisfactory)*
 - Be sure the cap is twisted down completely & tape or paraffin the lid to the vial.
 - Place the vial inside the biohazard bag provided and zip the bag shut.
 - Package as a Biological Substance Category B UN3373
2. Place the completed ASVL Lab Request Form in the outer pouch of the biohazard bag.
3. Keep the specimen refrigerated until it is shipped.
4. Put all specimens in an insulated shipping container, place a (frozen) refrigerant gel pack on top of the specimens, and seal the box.
5. Ship specimens early in the week (Monday or Tuesday) so they don't sit unrefrigerated over the weekend.
6. Put a prepaid ASVL address label and a Diagnostic Specimen Label on the box before mailing.
- 5 ASVL will return an empty shipping container to you with another postage-paid label.

Please call ASVL at (907) 474-7018 for additional supplies or questions about testing.

Thank you for helping to provide influenza surveillance in the State of Alaska.